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SITTING DOWN WITH THE DEAN STUDENTS LEARN TO LEAD

By Brian Meyer

Sharing quality time in a seminar with the dean of the college can help shape the rest of your college experience—if not the rest of your life.

Catherine Swoboda, ('08 agronomy), who works for the World Food Prize Foundation in Des Moines, says the Dean's Leadership Seminar was a highlight of her years at ISU. "It taught me the joy of thinking analytically and rigorously and the pleasure of generously sharing ideas and knowledge. And for a freshman to have access to instruction by the deans was very impressive," Swoboda says.

Each fall semester, a new cohort of stu-

dents takes the Dean's Leadership Seminar. The students are offered the opportunity as recipients of some of the college's premier endowed scholarships. The seminar, co-taught by Dean Wendy Wintersteen and Associate Dean of Academic and Global Programs David Acker, introduces the freshmen to leadership qualities, problem solving on current issues, global perspectives and responding to societal needs in agriculture and life sciences.

"These students are up-and-comers who'll be leaders in the college and in their future careers," says Wintersteen. "It's wonderful to follow these students as they

progress through college and into careers."

Nate Looker, a senior in agronomy and global resource systems, says the dean's seminar substantially shaped his undergraduate experience. "Associate Dean Acker exhibits the style of leadership I hope to develop with time, empowering others with genuine, respectful communication. He introduced me to colleagues with whom he thought I'd share interests, helping me diversify my experiences."

Rachel Owen, a senior who'll graduate in agronomy, says she remembers Wintersteen speaking about how to respond to a critical news article. "The reason that stuck with me is because of the professionalism in which she handled the situation," Owen says. "I try to model the same professionalism when I'm in a leadership role."

The seminar was a great motivator, Owen adds. "Since the class, I've been involved in many student organizations both on campus and nationally. The issues we addressed helped me become a better leader."

Allyson (Chwee) Dirksen ('08 agricultural business) took the Dean's Leadership Seminar in 2004 with then-associate dean Eric Hoiberg. "Dean Hoiberg's integrity made an impression on me. He was such an approachable, sincere mentor," says Dirksen, who now practices law in Sioux City.

Amy Peyton, now a senior in agricultural business, says she learned how important it was to contribute to a conversation with peers about real-world issues. "That was the best part, meeting and becoming friends with the amazing people in class, several of whom I'm still good friends with today." ■



CALS students **Andrew Owen**, sophomore in pre-diet and exercise, and **Gail Barnum**, junior in food science, are among the students who regularly visit with **Dean Wendy Wintersteen** as part of the Dean's Leadership Seminar.

Photo: Barbara McGreen